WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A process for preparing a solvent-based surfactant paste comprising the steps of:

A) forming an aqueous surfactant mixture by blending, by weight of the mixture:

(a) from about 5% to about 85% of an anionic sulfonated surfactant;

(b) from about 15% to about 95% of an organic solvent;

(c) from about 0.001% to about 40% of a chelant;

wherein the aqueous surfactant mixture has a water content of about 5% to 80% by weight of the aqueous surfactant mixture and the aqueous surfactant mixture is a non-Newtonian fluid;

B) drying the aqueous surfactant mixture under vacuum to form the solvent-based surfactant paste having a water content of less than about 1% and which is in the form of a Newtonian fluid having a substantially constant viscosity within the range of 100 cp to 100000 cp when measured at a temperature of 25°C and within the shear rate range of from 1 s^{-1} to 1000 s^{-1}.

2. The process of claim 1 wherein the aqueous surfactant mixture may further comprise from about 0.001% to about 40% of other additives selected from the group comprising bleach, bleach activator, buffers, builders, enzymes, whiteners, rheology modifiers, polymers and copolymers, wherein the other additives are provided in the form of an aqueous solution.

3. The process of claim 1 wherein the aqueous surfactant mixture is dried in an evaporative column.

4. The process of claim 1 wherein the step of forming an aqueous surfactant mixture includes blending from about 0.001% to about 40% of an ethoxylated hexamethylene diamine quaternary ammonium compound.

5. The process of claim 1 wherein the step of forming an aqueous surfactant mixture includes blending from about 0.001% to about 40% of other additives selected from the group comprising bleach, bleach activator, builder, enzymes, nonionic surfactants, whiteners and polymers.

6. The process of claim 1 wherein the organic solvent is selected from a group consisting of alkylene glycols, diethyl- and dipropylene glycol monobutyl ethers, glycol monobutyl ether, monoethylethers, monomethylethers, monopropylethers and monobutylethers of propoxy propanol, polyethlene glycols having a molecular weight of at least about 150, methyl acetate, methyl propoinate, methyl octanoate, methyl dodecanoate and mixtures thereof.

7. The process of claim 1 wherein the chelant is selected from a group consisting of amino carboxylates, phosphonates, amino phosponates, polyfunctionally-substituted aromatic chelating agents and mixtures thereof.

8. A process for preparing a solvent-based surfactant paste comprising the steps of:

A) forming a neutralized mixture by a continuous neutralization loop, the neutralized mixture has a composition comprising:

(a) an acid form of an anionic sulfonated surfactant and a base present in a molar ratio of from about 1:1 to about 9:1;

(b) an organic solvent; and

(c) a chelant;

wherein the neutralized mixture has a water content of from about 5% to about 50% by weight of the neutralized mixture and is a non-Newtonian fluid.

B) recirculating a first portion of the neutralized mixture;

C) removing a second portion of the neutralized mixture from the continuous neutralization loop;

D) drying the second portion of the neutralized mixture under vacuum to form the solvent-based surfactant paste having a water content of from about 0.2% to about 10% and which is in the form of a Newtonian fluid having a substantially constant viscosity within the range of 100 cP to 100000 cP when measured at a temperature of 25°C and within the shear rate range of from 1 s^{-1} to 1000 s^{-1}.

9. The process of claim 8 where the neutralized mixture further comprises other additives selected from the group comprising bleach, bleach activator, buffers, builders, enzymes, nonionic surfactants, whiteners, rheology modifiers, polymers and copolymers, wherein the other additives are provided in the form of an aqueous solution which has a water content of from about 5% to about 50% by weight of the neutralized mixture.

10. The process of claim 8 wherein the second portion of neutralized mixture is dried in an evaporative column.

11. The process of claim 8 wherein the acid form of an anionic surfactant is selected from a group consisting of linear alkyl benzene sulphonic acid, alkyl ethoxy sulphonic acid, alkyl polyalkxylate sulphonic acid, tallow alkyl sulphonic acid and alkyl sulphonic acid.

12. The process of claim 8 wherein the organic solvent is selected from a group consisting of alkylene glycols, diethyl- and dipropylene glycol monobutyl ethers, glycol monobutyl ether, monoethyl-, monomethyl-, monopropyl- and monobutylethers of propoxy propanol and mixtures there of, polyethlene glycols having a molecular weight of at least about 150, methyl acetate, methyl propoinate, methyl octanoate and methyl dodecanoate.

13. The process of claim 8 wherein the chelant is selected from a group consisting of amino carboxylates, phosphonates, amino phosponates, polyfunctionally-substituted aromatic chelating agents and mixtures thereof.

14. The process of claim 8 wherein after step C additional organic solvent is added to the neutralized mixture, so that after the addition of the additional organic solvent the neutralized mixture has a water content of from about 5% to about 50% by weight of the neutralized mixture.

15. The process of claim 8 wherein after step C additional chelant is added to the neutralized mixture, so that after the addition of the additional chelant the neutralized mixture has a water content of from about 5% to about 50% by weight of the neutralized mixture.

16. A process for drying detergent ingredients comprising the steps of:

A) forming an aqueous detergent ingredient mixture by blending, by weight of the mixture wherein the aqueous detergent ingredient mixture has a water content of about 5% to 80% by weight of the aqueous detergent ingredient mixture;

B) drying the aqueous detergent ingredient mixture using an Agitated Thin Film Evaporator.

17. A process for converting Newtonian liquids into non-Newtonian liquids comprising the steps of:

A) forming an aqueous Newtonian liquid mixture; and

B) drying said mixture using an Agitated Thin Film Evaporator (ATFE) such that a non-Newtonian liquid is produced

18. A process for converting non-Newtonian liquids into Newtonian liquids comprising the steps of:

A) forming an aqueous non-Newtonian liquid mixture; and

B) drying said mixture using an Agitated Thin Film Evaporator (ATFE) such that a Newtonian liquid is produced

19. A process for preparing anhydrous agglomerates comprising the steps of: A) producing a binder;

B) drying said binder using an Agitated Thin Film Evaporator; and

C) combining said dried binder with powders such that an agglomerate is produced.